

Health care is expensive.

One of the ways you can save money is by buying generic.

Ask About Generics

BE DRUG SMART

The next time you need a prescription, ask your doctor if it is available as a generic. More and more Americans are. In fact, in 2006, generic medicines accounted for 63 percent of all prescriptions dispensed in the U.S. – an increase of 22.3 percent.¹

Generics are much less expensive than their brand-name counterparts. The average retail price of a generic prescription drug in 2006 was \$32 versus \$111 for the average retail price of a brand name prescription drug.² If you're on a tiered drug plan, you will pay the least amount for a generic or tier-one drug.

Generic vs. Brand: What's the Difference?

While generic drugs continue to gain in popularity, many people remain skeptical. Here are answers to some commonly asked questions about generic drugs.

Q: Why are generic drugs less expensive?

A: The generic manufacturer does not bear the cost of research and development.

Q: Are generic drugs safe?

A: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates and monitors the quality of all drugs, both brand and generic. The generic manufacturer must provide evidence that the drug has the same active ingredients and works the same way in the body as the original brand-name product.



Q: Are all drugs available as a generic?

A: No. Many are still protected by patent and are sold as brand-name only. However, more than half of all brand-name drugs do have generics available. In fact, 8,730 of the 11,487 drugs listed in the FDA's Orange Book have generic counterparts³. Your doctor or pharmacist can tell you if your prescription is available as a generic and if it's the right choice for you.

Q: How do I know if a drug is available as a generic?

A: You can ask your pharmacist. You can also check the Wellmark Drug List under General Pharmacy Information on www.wellmark.com. Be sure to check often as brand-name drugs become available as generics quite often. For example, Zocor (cholesterol treatment), Ambien (sleeping pill), and Norvasc (blood pressure) are now available as generics.

Wellmark's Top 20 List

So, are Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield members buying generic? For the most part, yes. Here is a list of the 20 most prescribed prescription medications for Wellmark members in the second quarter of 2007, and how many prescriptions were filled. Those drugs in blue are generic. Their brand-name counterparts are in parentheses.

Drug Name	Condition for which it is Commonly Prescribed	Number of Prescriptions Filled
LIPITOR	Cholesterol Treatment	54,410
HYDROCODONE/ACETAMINOPHEN (VICODIN® ES)	Pain Reliever	43,909
LEVOTHYROXINE SODIUM (SYNTHROID®)	Thyroid Disease	42,834
LISINAPRIL (PRINIVIL / ZESTRIL®)	Blood Pressure	39,566
AMOXICILLIN (AMOXIL®)	Antibiotic	36,598
AZITHROMYCIN (ZITHROMAX®)	Antibiotic	33,921
ATENOLOL (TENORMIN®)	Blood Pressure	31,681
HYDROCHLOROTHIAZIDE (MICROZIDE®)	Diuretic	31,311
LEXAPRO	Antidepressant	29,600
SIMVASTATIN (ZOCOR®)	Cholesterol Treatment	27,601
SINGULAIR	Asthma	24,781
OMEPRAZOLE (PRILOSEC®)	Heartburn	24,520
SYNTHROID	Thyroid Disease	23,748
SERTRALINE HCL (ZOLOFT®)	Antidepressant	23,263
ZYRTEC	Allergies	22,524
METFORMIN HCL (GLUCOPHAGE®)	Diabetes	22,304
FEXOFENADINE HCL (ALLEGRA®)	Antihistamine	21,979
CEPHALEXIN (KEFLEX®)	Antibiotic	21,588
FLUOXETINE HCL (PROZAC®)	Antidepressant	20,518
EFFEXOR XR	Antidepressant	20,355



Tools to Help You Keep Costs Down

BlueConnection Pharmacy Tools at myhealth@wellmark.com allow you to get answers about your prescription benefits 24/7:

- **MY PRESCRIPTIONS:** View a comprehensive list of all retail and home delivery prescriptions you have filled using your prescription drug benefit.
- **WELLMARK DRUG LIST:** Research prescription drugs to determine how they may be covered within your health plan, and to help you find lower-cost alternatives.
- **MORE:** Find a pharmacy, learn about drug interactions, and look up your pharmacy benefits.

LEARN MORE ➔ For more information about making a difference in the cost of health care, visit the Decisions Count section at www.wellmark.com.

¹ IMS Health

² The National Association of Chain Drug Stores, 2006

³ FDA, MedAd News